

Message Text

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22

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 PRS-01

/035 W

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R 122250Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8812

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POUCHED AS INFO TO ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, CA

SUBJ: CIVAIR: AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS AND FRENCH
LANGUAGE QUESTION

1. PRESS REPORTED FEB 7 BREAKDOWN IN COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GOC MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
(MOT) AND CANADIAN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ASSOCIATION
(CATCA) OVER FRENCH LANGUAGE QUESTION. WIDE RANGE OF
AGREEMENT REACHED ON ECONOMIC QUESTION BUT, ACCORDING
TO CATCA PRESIDENT LIVINGSTON, GOC NEGOTIATORS WERE
UNWILLING TO CONSIDER CATCA OPPOSITION TO LANGUAGE POLICY
IN CONTEXT THESE NEGOTIATIONS. CATCA HAS ASKED FOR
ESTABLISHMENT OF CONCILIATION BOARD, BUT FEARS GOC
WILL ALSO REFUSE CONSIDER LANGUAGE QUESTION IN THIS
CONTEXT.

2. SENIOR MOT ATC OFFICIAL HAS CONFIRMED TO TCO FEB 11
GENERAL ACCURACY OF PRESS REPORTS BUT NOTED THAT THERE
ARE SOME ECONOMIC ISSUES (E.G., HOURS OF WORK) STILL
OUTSTANDING. HOWEVER, PAY RAISES WITHIN THE ANTI-
INFLATION GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED. APPOINTMENT OF
CONCILIATION BOARD HAS BEEN TRADITIONAL IN PAST
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NEGOTIATIONS WITH CONTROLLERS. UNDER PRESENT CONTRACT,

CONTROLLERS WOULD BE FREE TO STRIKE AT END OF MARCH. APPOINTMENT OF BOARD, IN THIS OFFICIALS VIEW, WILL DELAY POSSIBLE RESORT TO STRIKE ACTION FOR SOME WEEKS -- POSSIBLY TO EARLY MAY.

3. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, GOC IS STRONGLY COMMITTED AS A MATTER OF POLICY TO EXTENDING INTRODUCTION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE INTO ATC OPERATIONS WITHIN QUEBEC AND SEES THIS ENDEAVOR AS PROMOTING SAFETY. PILOTS AND MANY OTHER ELEMENTS IN CANADIAN AVIATION INDUSTRY ARE OPPOSED ESPECIALLY TO EXTENSION OF PROGRAM FROM PRESENT VFR STAGE TO IFR OPERATIONS. GOC UNWILLING TO NEGOTIATE ON THIS ISSUE IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SITUATION. OUR CONTACT FEELS THAT IF A CONTROLLERS' STRIKE IS GOING TO OCCUR OVER ANY UNRESOLVED QUESTION IT WILL BE THIS ONE.

4. COMMENT: IN EMBASSY VIEW, IF SUCH A STRIKE OCCURS, GOC MIGHT WELL RESORT TO BACK TO WORK LEGISLATION AS IT HAS DONE IN OTHER CRITICAL INDUSTRIES. HOWEVER, THIS WOULD BE VERY CONTENTIOUS. WHILE QUEBEC MEMBERS OF LIBERAL CAUCUS WOULD STRONGLY SUPPORT SUCH LEGISLATION, MANY LIBERALS FROM OTHER AREAS AS WELL AS MUCH OF THE OPPOSITION PERCEIVE THE ISSUE AS ONE IN WHICH SAFETY IS ONE THE SIDE OF THOSE DEMANDING RETENTION OF ENGLISH AS THE SOLE LANGUAGE OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL. IN THE END, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO INVOKE ITS MAJORITY WHIP TO SECURE ENACTMENT.

5. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM WALTER M. MCLEISH, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, CANADIAN AIR TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION, MOT, THAT HE INTENDS TO VISIT WASHINGTON, PERHAPS IN LATE FEBRUARY, TO BRIEF OFFICE OF FLIGHT STANDARDS AND OTHER FAA ELEMENTS ON GOC POLICY IN THIS AREA. IN MID-DECEMBER, MCLEISH APPEARED ON NATIONAL TV DISCUSSION PROGRAM WHICH DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME TO ATC BILINGUALSIM. MCLEISH CONSIDERS THIS DISCUSSION STILL RELEVANT AND HAS PROVIDED EMBASSY WITH AUDIOTAPE (WHICH ALSO INCLUDES REMARKS ON CONCORDE AND DASH-7 QUESTIONS). WE ARE SENDING IT TO EB/OA/AVP LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(GORDON) FOR FORWARDING TO FAA AND SUGGEST IT MIGHT WELL BE PLAYED IN STATE FOR OA, EUR/CAN AND INR. TAPE IS STANDARD SONY, AUTO SENSOR, C-60 AND RUNS ABOUT 25 MINUTES.

6. EMBASSY IS AWARE OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MOT AND FAA TO DEVELOP CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY USG WOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY IN THE EVENT OF A STRIKE FOR

CERTAIN NORTH ATLANTIC AIR SPACE NORMALLY CONTROLLED
BY CANADA. FAA TEAM UNDERSTOOD TO BE EXPECTED IN OTTAWA
LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH. IF FAA BELIEVES IT
HELPFUL TCO MAY BE AVAILABLE TO JOIN U.S. TEAM. IN
ANY EVENT, IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR SENIOR TEAM MEMBER
TO CALL AT EMBASSY WHILE IN OTTAWA. JOHNSON

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